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COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 18 December 1995, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution 50/87 entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe". By that resolution, the Assembly, acknowledging the increasing contribution of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security in its region through its activities in early warning, preventive diplomacy, crisis management, arms control and disarmament, and post-crisis stabilization and rehabilitation measures, welcomed the intensified cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and OSCE and requested the Secretary-General to explore with the Chairman-in-Office of OSCE possibilities for further improvement in that regard. The Secretary-General was requested to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-first session a report on the implementation of the resolution.

2. By the same resolution, the General Assembly decided to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-first session the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe".

3. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/87.

II. MEASURES OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

4. On 26 May 1993, letters were exchanged between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairman-in-Office of the Council of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) (see A/48/185, annexes I and II). 1/ By those letters, the signatories accepted the arrangements described in the framework for cooperation and coordination between the two organizations (A/48/185, annex II, appendix).

5. By resolution 48/5 of 22 October 1993, the General Assembly decided to invite CSCE to participate in the sessions and work of the Assembly in the capacity of observer.

6. The observer status of OSCE and the framework agreement referred to in paragraph 4 above constitute the institutional parameters of cooperation between the United Nations and OSCE.

7. As was noted in the previous reports of the Secretary-General on cooperation and coordination with OSCE submitted to the Assembly at its forty-eighth, forty-ninth and fiftieth sessions (A/48/549, A/49/529 and A/50/564), good contacts have been established and maintained between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairman-in-Office of OSCE. The Secretary-General has met regularly with both the Chairman-in-Office and the Secretary-General of OSCE and their representatives meet United Nations officials on a regular basis at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Secretary-General of OSCE participated in the meeting on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations convened by the Secretary-General on 15 and 16 February 1996. The Secretary-General has been represented at the meetings of the Committee of Senior Officials of OSCE (now the Senior Council) in Prague as well as at other OSCE meetings. The Secretary-General also attended and addressed the last OSCE summit of Heads of State or Government which took place in Budapest on 5 and 6 December 1994.

8. In continuation of the informal understanding that there should be a division of labour between the two organizations, the United Nations has retained the lead in peacemaking efforts in Tajikistan and in Abkhazia, Georgia, while OSCE has had the lead on the question of the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Moldova and South Ossetia, Georgia. Specific efforts have been made to improve contacts and cooperation in the field, at the negotiating table and between the respective headquarters. These steps have resulted in enhanced coordination with the aim of making better use of the resources of the international community in the interests of the countries being assisted.

9. During the past year, cooperation between the United Nations and OSCE has been evident at a variety of levels.

10. On 30 and 31 May 1996, in Geneva, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), together with OSCE and the International

Organization for Migration (IOM), organized a Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States. The conference was attended by delegations of 87 States, 27 international organizations and 77 non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The objectives of the conference were to provide a reliable forum for the countries of the region to discuss population displacement and refugee problems in a humanitarian and non-political way; to review the population movements taking place in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), clarifying the categories of concern; and to elaborate a non-binding programme of action for the CIS countries. The conference, which was opened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, adopted a programme of action which includes measures aimed at establishing national migration systems and developing appropriate policies and operational activities. Implementation and follow-up activities are also included in order to ensure the sustainability of the conference process.

11. UNHCR has begun collaboration with the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities on the subject of return and reintegration of formerly deported peoples in CIS countries. A workshop was held at Geneva in July 1996 as part of the follow-up to the CIS conference. Other areas of mutual interest have also been examined jointly by the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities and UNHCR, particularly with regard to questions of nationality and citizenship in Europe.

12. The informal process of tripartite consultations, initiated in 1994 between the United Nations Office at Geneva, OSCE and the Council of Europe, continued with the holding of consultations in Paris in December 1995 under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe. Because of the intensified activities with regard to the former Yugoslavia, particularly by OSCE, it did not prove feasible to hold target-oriented meetings, as previously planned, during the course of 1996. The next tripartite consultations are expected to be held before the end of 1996 at Geneva at the invitation of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

13. This supplementary informal process has proved to be informative and effective. It ensures the active participation of OSCE institutions, as well as of the Chairman-in-Office, in a regular dialogue with humanitarian organizations and thereby assures an essential link between the processes for the prevention, control and resolution of conflicts on the one hand and humanitarian operations on the other. It ensures the regular flow of information between agencies and provides scope for coordinated and complementary action. The process was further strengthened in June 1995 when the OSCE secretariat invited humanitarian agencies to meet all OSCE heads of field missions. Given the emphasis of this process on humanitarian activities, other organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Organization for Migration and the Commission of the European Union, are included in the consultations on the basis of their involvement in the areas under discussion. On the United Nations side, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Economic Commission for Europe are regularly represented. Other United

Nations entities are invited depending on their involvement in the operations under discussion. In view of the usefulness of the process to all the participating organizations in the field of humanitarian assistance, it has been proposed that it be extended to also cover social and economic matters in Europe.

14. The Economic Commission for Europe works closely with the OSCE Economic Forum and on a continuing basis provides support to the OSCE secretariat regarding economic aspects of security in Europe.

15. In many of the countries in which both organizations are active, cooperation has intensified at the field level.

16. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, OSCE was responsible for the conduct of elections for the Presidency and other high-level bodies, held on 14 September 1996. Monitors of the International Police Task Force (IPTF) assisted OSCE and were deployed throughout the country on election day, monitoring and providing guidance to local police forces. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and other United Nations offices and organizations also assisted OSCE in organizing the elections within the limits of their mandates.

17. In February 1996, the High Commissioner for Human Rights provided an introductory human-rights training course to OSCE monitors in Vienna, prior to their departure for Bosnia and Herzegovina. This was supplemented by a human-rights field guide, as well as a more comprehensive training course conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina in July 1996, in cooperation with the Council of Europe. Professionals from the High Commissioner's field operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina also participated in the drafting of human rights-related election guidelines and proposed and evaluated responses to election-related rights abuses.

18. Regarding the conflict over Nagorny Karabakh, involving Azerbaijan and Armenia, the United Nations continues to support the ongoing peacemaking efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group. In view of the continuing humanitarian crisis in the region, as well as in support of the OSCE Minsk Group, the High Commissioner for Refugees sent a mission to Baku and Yerevan from 9 to 12 September 1996. In meetings with the two Presidents and other senior government officials in Baku and Yerevan, the mission discussed the humanitarian situations in Azerbaijan and Armenia, including the possibility of starting non-political negotiations on humanitarian issues, in particular the return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

19. Consultations are under way between the High Commissioner for Human Rights and OSCE regarding the implementation of a programme for the protection and promotion of human rights in Abkhazia, Georgia, and the establishment of an office in Sukhumi, to which OSCE would contribute an experienced officer. OSCE continues as a participant in the peacemaking activities of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Abkhazia, Georgia.

20. The United Nations and OSCE continued their interaction in Tajikistan with a view to bringing about a political solution to the four-year-old conflict.

The United Nations was primarily responsible for peacemaking and peacekeeping in the country, while the OSCE mission there has concentrated on the promotion of human rights and democratic institution-building. In addition, it provided protection to Tajik returnees in the southern province of Khatlon. OSCE representatives participated as observers at the United Nations-sponsored inter-Tajik talks. The United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan and the OSCE Mission in Tajikistan are cooperating closely in broadening the spectrum of political parties and movements participating in the inter-Tajik political dialogue.

21. On 16 March 1995, the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights read out a statement, approved by consensus, concerning the situation of human rights in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was requested to continue a dialogue with the Government of the Russian Federation in the implementation of his mandate with a view to securing respect for all human rights, and to pursue his contacts with the Chairman-in-Office of OSCE. 2/ Following that statement, the High Commissioner has held consultations with the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on the situation in Chechnya, in particular on the implementation of his mandate in this regard. Likewise, the High Commissioner's envoy for Chechnya, Professor Fausto Pocar, has held talks with the OSCE Assistance Group in Grozny and with other OSCE representatives regarding the High Commissioner's plan to deploy a human rights officer to work with the Group. It has not been possible, however, to implement this plan. The High Commissioner and OSCE continue to consult on this matter.

22. During the reporting period, the United Nations and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights jointly conducted electoral observation missions in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan. Following official requests from those Governments, the two organizations sent joint needs assessment missions and subsequently established joint electoral missions, observing the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan in November 1995 and the presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan in December 1995. Both missions observed the electoral process and coordinated and supported the activities of other international election observers.

23. The past year has witnessed the continuing consolidation of links between the United Nations and OSCE at all levels. This cooperation and coordination aims at making the best possible use of the resources made available by Governments to international organizations to carry out the tasks assigned to them. The avoidance of duplicative or overlapping mandates will facilitate such cooperation and contribute to effective coordination.

Notes

1/ At the Summit of CSCE Heads of State and Government, held at Budapest on 5 and 6 December 1994, it was agreed to change the name of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as of 1 January 1995 (see A/49/800).

2/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 3 (E/1995/23), para. 594.